GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

Introduction of Temple Guides System – Major Temples – Regarding.

REVENUE (ENDTS.II) DEPARTMENT

G.O.MS.No. 255 **Date:07.07.2015**

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ORDER:

Hindu Temples are the epitome of Indian culture. Andhra Pradesh has a good number of reputed temples and a number of Peethams and Mutts that subscribe to the preservation of Vedic Culture and Hindu Dharma.

2) The main temples in terms of revenue and pilgrims visited are Srisailam, Simhachalam, Annavaram, Dwaraka Tirumala, Kanaka Durga, Srikalahasthi, and Kanipakam.

3) Every Temple has its own historical importance and spiritual significance. It is necessary that devotees are provided with correct information of the region, destination, environment and nearby places of religious importance. For this reason, there is a great need for introduction of Temple Guides.

TEMPLE GUIDES:

A Temple Guide is a person hired to conduct a pilgrim and point out objects of interest and explain the importance of the objects relating to a temple. He is hired to inform, direct and advise the pilgrim before and during his stay. His duties include all activities related to the temple visit until the pilgrims' departure. He is a front-liner in developing temple-centric tourism and is expected to give good service to the pilgrims so that they feel satisfied and develop passion for a re-visit. He is supposed to be a passionate person having love and reverence for temple culture and be enthusiastic to spread the message of Sanatana Dharma through temple as a medium of communication.

ROLE OF TEMPLE GUIDE:

A) The Temple guide has to communicate with pilgrims in the language of their choice. A decent command of Telugu and English and Hindi preferably is needed. He leads a group of pilgrims around the temple interpreting the culture and heritage of the area. He helps the pilgrims to understand and appreciate the culture of the region and provide useful information relating to the area and the shrine. He is expected to be a master of information of the temple. He has to inculcate interest and inclination among pilgrims to appreciate Hindu traditions in general and temple tradition in particular. He has to efficiently handle any questions relating to the temple, its timings, Arjita Sevas, fairs and festivals, tariffs and traditions related to the temple rituals or practices. The temple guide also needs to be trained in the areas relating to ecology, geology, bio-diversity, history and mythology of the location.

B) He has to narrate interesting anecdotes or stories of even small exhibits, as small things carry big stories. He should provide help about climatic conditions, culture, language, distances, travel modes, charges or fares, connects, risks, unique information, facilities and famous things only available there to buy or to preserve. He has to be well-versed with first-aid techniques to handle any emergency and provide some instant medicare.

C) Temple guide has to prepare and plan the itineraries for the visiting-pilgrims, greet the visitors upon arrival and arrange transportation between locations. He is required to perform clerical duties, collect fees and in certain cases promote temple-managed gift shops and sell religious publications or souvenirs wherever kept on sale.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEMPLE GUIDES:

A) Temple guide should possess a **minimum of a Degree in Humanities or Tourism or Hospitality or History & Archaeology or other areas as a regular student** in a College or University.

B) The State Institute of Temple Administration (SITA) will organize detailed training programmes and provide on-the-job education. This includes providing effective communication skills and time-management skills.

C) He should be between 25 and 45 years with good physique, pleasing personality and be a Hindu dedicated to Vedic culture and Hindu Dharma. Retired Lecturers / Teachers of History will also be considered if needed.

REMUNERATION

Temple guides are entitled to 50% of the share from the prescribed charges collected by the temple from the pilgrims who hire the temple guide, calculated on monthly basis. However, they are entitled to free-boarding and accommodation with minimum facilities in the temple-owned Choultries or rest houses free of cost wherever available on sharing basis.

SELECTION PROCESS:

There will be a written test for 100 marks of 2 hours duration. The questions will relate to Indian culture, temple-tourism, Indian cartography, Indian History, Hindu Dharma and fairs and festivals. It will be followed by a viva-voce. Original certificates should be submitted for verification before the written test.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Selection Committee consists of the following members:

The Director, SITA will be the Chairman with the EO of the temple concerned as member-convenor. The Advisor Endowments Mr. Sivarama Krishna and a representative of the Tourism Department / APTDC will be members of the Selection Committee.

TRAINING

Successful candidates will have to undergo training in the State Institute of Temple Administration (SITA) for two weeks at a prominent temple or SITA Headquarters. Training kit, boarding and accommodation will be provided free of cost. During training, the trainees would be imparted knowledge of essential guiding skills, temples and their historical backgrounds, fairs and festivals, Vedic culture, Sanatana Dharma, Epics, Ethical values and Philosophical postulates. Group discussions, seminars and exposure visit will be there. Interactive methodology is adopted during training. No leave of absence is permitted during training period. The Director, SITA will design the syllabus and the question paper.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT OF TEMPLE GUIDES

It is to be clearly noted that temple guides are not and will not be temple employees. They are taken on contract for a period of 3 years. Their service can be terminated if they are irregular or indisciplined or inefficient. Successful candidates on completion of training will be engaged as Temple guides in prominent Temples of the State. They will be provided with identity cards as well.

1) Temple guide should dress in a presentable manner to uphold the dignity and honour of the Hindu Dharma. He should have an identity mark like Bindu / Bottu / Vibhuti / Tilak and put on traditional attire.

2) He should not canvas for any product or business of any kind such as hotels, guest houses, shops, transport operators.

3) He will obey the instructions given by Executive Officer in the interest of the temple and pilgrims.

4) The Temple guide would, therefore, bear in mind that *"Word of Mouth" or spoken word or* publicity and comments have a tremendous impact on the image and glory of the Temple. This is several times more valuable than the most expensive advertisement that can be put out.

5) The Temple guide would ensure to give correct and all possible information of the latest developments in the Temple, convey the positive aspects of his culture and tradition and be well versed with matters relating to local customs, habits and traditions to ensure that both devotees/pilgrims and the local people respect each other. He should be punctual, well groomed and cultured.

6) He should not criticize any individual, custom, tradition, practice of other religions or social denominations or political parties.

7) The Temple guide shall refrain himself / herself from all possible arguments and remember that **the customer is always right and the satisfaction of the customer is the motto.**

8) The Temple guide would respect and safeguard the heritage, sanctity and ecology of the Temple and the place.

4) The CED shall implement the Temple Guide System within 90 days positively (before 2nd October, 2015) 7 major temples and extend it to other important temples in due course.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

J.S.V. PRASAD
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Commissioner of Endowments, AP Hyderabad.
The All Regional Joint Commissioners of Endowments Dept.
The All Executive Officers of Endowments Dept. through CED.
The All District Collectors of AP.

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER